

COMMENCEMENT THOUGHTS

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121 93

This is the first time the Class of 1935 has been together and it seems that we should introduce ourselves to each other. But we are not all here, even now! A part of the University product of this school year went their way into the world of affairs last August at the Summer Commencement, another part bade us goodbye at the December Commencement and yet another part received their degrees at the March Commencement. The number already graduated and gone and enrolled in the Class of 1935 is 771. We who are here today constitute only a part of the entire Class, but we number 1346.

In introducing us to ourselves it will stimulate our mutual interest to learn not only who we are but whence we came and what it is that absorbs our scholastic urge. Our parents and many friends present today will likewise no doubt appreciate the general introduction, and will understand more intimately and completely the life purposes of their State University.

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In this graduating group today 134 come from other states of the United States and 9 from foreign countries; 25 states are here represented and 4 foreign countries. Some come from Europe, others from Asia, and others from Latin America. Although far inland, this University is cosmopolitan without being polyglot, and enrolls its students from the continents and the isles of the sea!

Nor do all here who end as graduates begin as freshmen. It is quite customary to begin one's college studies in one institution and finish them in another! Especially is this practice increasing in such a state institution as this. A student can complete the freshman studies, or in numerous cases, two years of college study, near home or in some institution of general character, and then come here for the advantages to be found in large libraries, or well-equipped laboratories or more advanced studies, or research, or because of a desire to enter upon a technical or professional career.

The University welcomes all these advanced students, builds its courses and equipment and teaching staff so that they continue their studies here with utmost profit, and in doing so carries forward a sacred purpose of the state expressed in its foundation enactment and in much legislation since. Indeed, of the number gathered here today, 414 came to us as juniors and sophomores, and 941 as freshmen.

The recipients of the various grades and kinds of graduate degrees today have had their collegiate training in many colleges in many states and countries; Ohio is making it feasible for the State University to organize widely and develop intensively the graduate work in a progressively diversified fashion.

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This is a summary account of those of us who are present at this time for such meritorious honors and certifications as the University may award. The picture presented indicates an intelligent, a forward-looking, and an enduring purpose of the state to provide opportunity for individual enlightenment and training. For each individual. But not for purely selfish ends! The state is both political and social; society, the community, are bound together by social aims, and the social consciousness of the individuals is imperative.

Let us linger with this thought a moment! The state undertakes to provide universal and practically free education for two reasons:- that each individual may be cultivated to the extent of his capacity, and so be enabled to make his maximum contribution to society; and also so that through education the individual would have an appreciative understanding of democratic government and would help bear its burdens and share its opportunities!



These are fundamental conceptions in our scheme of government today; they mark the highest tide of civilization the world has ever known; they present to every citizen a "glass" in which he can behold himself and by which he is perpetually reminded of his opportunities, of his responsibilities! Upon what nobler ideals can government be based?

In these times, when in some other portions of the world governments are being built upon the glorification of a few and the ordered repression of the many, we may well give thought to the individual benefits of our own form of government, to its need for occasional adjustment to altered conditions, and to remember without lapse, that ours is the responsibility of making it work! But we can never accomplish this end by slogans! Intelligence and faith and unremitting diligence are required - and who so well able to furnish these as the college graduate!

It is appropriate on this occasion to recall some vivid experiences while you have been students here. We have been coming through an era of the most profound confusion in industry and consequently in the entire circle of our economic arrangements.

Much worse than in the Great War! There we had one objective and a common enemy and all our energy and resources were mobilized to win. But here we could not identify our enemy - we are still debating that point! If we had been able to segregate him and to point at him with desperate certainty, I am sure we would long since have overcome him in characteristic American fashion! And to add to the general perplexity we have only in recent weeks learned that the state, in its warfare, has been employing some unlawful weapons! And so our industrial and social scene is still confused. In the presence of this mighty Dragon there is a lusty call for a modern St. George; he may be in this very Class of 1935!

In these years also, we have made repeated efforts to thrust ourselves into the stratosphere and unlock its mysteries! We have proceeded fearlessly with the discussion of the world inside the atom and have championed one theory and another of the cosmic ray, and have been rich in our hypotheses in unnumbered scientific fields. In the automotive industry we have achieved marvels in shop economy and in the finished product. Formerly men in undertaking polar expeditions hurried in and tagged the pole and escaped outward again, or tried to do so! But recently we have

seen them deliberately sitting for a year at the world's apex and exploring and charting on terms of easy familiarity with ice and snow and penguins, and adding to the foreign possessions of the United States the eternally refrigerated Little America!

While we have been adding this we have been completing the plans to release another great foreign possession, the Philippines, which we have latterly looked upon as a trust, to be given political autonomy at a date now certain. The Filipinos have ratified by overwhelming vote.

Recently in one of Europe's sensitive ethnical districts, under the regulation of the world's supra-national government, the people expressed their national preference unmistakably by plebiscite, and their wish has been converted into political reality.

Both inside of the United States and outside the world is exciting, full of cross currents, presenting untold opportunities to young people of trained hand and mind, with youth's love of adventure and virgin courage! You are a part of this scene!

In your progress through the University you have met many teachers; have you thought of the professor as one who constantly improves in his methods and in his capacities? Doubtless every professor you have known has been experimenting with his ways of teaching quite as much as he has with his laboratory equipment and procedures, and each year deals with students more successfully. The professor will freely admit that he has received much help and inspiration from able students; and if the student is muddle-brained or thick-skulled the professor's ingenuity is taxed to the limit to get him to understand. So, either way, the teacher improves with the help of the student. It is a secret which may be revealed to you here and now that a professor makes many changes in his teaching practices each year and discovers a new freshness in the subject matter largely due to the student influence! We are more sensitive than you supposed!



We believe that, whatever courses you may have labored over in these years, you have acquired habits and have cultivated abilities which will be universally useful - a kind of "Open, Sesame"! the open mind, the analytical approach, some testing techniques - these tools with which we hope your study here has provided you, will sharpen and refine with intelligent use. Are you an engineer, a lawyer, a physician, a teacher? You should expect also to meet and deal with many types of society's demands outside of those fields. You should find yourselves quite adaptable, quite flexible.

And it has been the University's fixed purpose to carry a student through such courses as will equip him technically or professionally, or by way of general culture, but so to vary the menu and so to liberalize the teaching and coordination of subject matter as to give the student a degree of general development, and an alertness to the importance of human relations, and social and civic conditions.

The business of developing an individual calls for most of a lifetime! We have caught you here in impressionable years, when the acquisitive faculty is at maximum and when the faculty of reason, of discrimination, is unfolding vigorously, the very period at which the molding and shaping of mentality and personality are possible most significantly. We trust that our educational processes have not been found wanting!

As we come to the close of this college time you have noticed that the University has become more humane, more considerate. And possibly it is due to your refining influence that this change has come about. We are making it easier to leave, just as we have been striving to make your stay here more resultful.

I have no doubt you experienced a feeling of satisfaction when you found that the University had quit charging you with the diploma fee! I have heard no complaints about that. Then you are no longer reminded in semi-official way that it will cost you three dollars to become a member of the Ohio State University Association; there is no such barrier to membership now - you are by graduation a member, without charge.

Let me say that this membership is valuable; it puts you into social relationships at once with a group of Ohio State University graduates in the communities of Ohio and in many other parts of the world; there are county organizations and district organizations, and you will be both pleased and benefited by these associations. You will also keep in touch with the University, which will be good for us and refreshing to you. The Monthly, published by the Association, is one of the leading college journals of the country, full of University news and pictures, presented with consummate craftsmanship. You will get your diploma presently, the Monthly will come to you through the year, and membership is an "ipso facto" matter. You are very fortunate!

The University also endeavors, through placement agencies which it maintains, to find suitable employment for you. Our interest in you individually does not end with this Commencement!

Permit me, in taking leave of you, to express on behalf of the Faculty and the University community our very warm thanks for your inspiration to us in these years - for your contribution to our understanding of youth, and to betterments in our procedures in dealing with students and their manifold interests! And may we express the hope that our experiences together here will enable us mutually to carry tomorrow's work more successfully, to make our domestic lives more happy, and to assume the opportunities and the duties of citizenship in this Democracy where Government is the concern of everyone!

If any of you become eminent or famous, we shall make demonstrative claim upon you; we shall let it be known that you are our product! We shall be very happy if you feel the same way about it!